(d) As per the information available the journey of illegal immigrants is arranged by some unscrupulous agents but the immigrants do not divulge details of these agents. However, as far as ECR countries are concerned, a few cases have come to the notice of the Ministry from time to time where the workers have been sent abroad by illegal/unscrupulous Recruiting agents.

(e) In case of such activities by unregistered Recruiting Agents, State Police is requested to take legal action. Concerned POE also files FIR.

During the last three years 2004 to 2006 about 170 complaints have been filed against the unregistered recruiting agents and 38 (including 21 alone in 2006) prosecution sanctions issued.

In respect of such complaints against any registered Recruiting agent, action like show cause, suspension, cancellation of certificate and even forfeiture of Bank Guarantee is taken. In appropriate cases, FIR is also filed. During the last two years 2005-2006 about 52 registration certificates were cancelled.

**HSMP programme of UK**

2635. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, faced with an uncertain future, about 30,000 Indians who went to London for looking better prospects under the Highly Skilled Migrants Progamme have appealed to the President and Prime Minister to take up their plight with the British Prime Minister to ensure that new migrants rules were not made applicable to those who are already in the UK under the HSMP;

(b) whether the British Government have victimized by changing the rules of the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme under which they went there; and

(c) if so, to what extent Government have agreed to consider their request?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) The UK Home Office, in March, 2006, presented to the Parliament

with the new immigration guidelines "A Point-based System : Making Migration Work for Britain" and announced its implementation from 7th November, 2006. According to the new guidelines, for an extension of visa or for Indefinite Leave of Settlement, a person staying in the UK under HSMP has to earn 75 points. The revised rules require the applicants to re-qualify through a stringent points based system on the basis of his age, earnings and UK experience for their further visa extension as against economic activity alone when entered into the UK.

(b) and (c) The new HSMP rules are applicable to professionals from all countries who have migrated to the UK under the Programme. It is expected that the majority of migrants currently in the UK under the HSMP will qualify under the new point-based system. It has been informed by the Government of UK that transitional arrangements have been put in place to support those existing participants of the HSMP who will fail to satisfy the new points scoring assessment. The HSMP is designed to attract only highly skilled young people to the UK to seek and take work.

**Review of functioning of Local Self Government**

†2636. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken any assessment or review with regard to functioning of local self Governance bodies of the country during the last three years;

(b) if so, the State-wise details thereof;

(c) whether Government would enact any legislation to make Panchayati Raj Institutions empowered and public oriented; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The three-Volume "State of the Panchayats — A Mid Term Review and Appraisal" has been prepared and was placed on the Table of the House during Winter Session 2006. A brief summary is outlined below:

1. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is an innovation of the UPA Government because no previous government has had a separate Ministry or even

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.